

the **Loyalist**

9th Edition 2020

NO SURRENDER

TO DRUG DEALERS

SERVING THE LOYALIST COMMUNITY ACROSS THE UK £1.50



ULSTER DAY ANNIVERSARY

It has been a long summer of sorts and that's not talking about the weather either may I add, instead its been a long six months of stress and worry for many concerned with the Covid-19 pandemic. As we approach Autumn things will get harder and I won't dwell too much on that as we have an article on this topic included this month. Summer has been different that's for sure be it economically, culturally socially. Life has changed remarkably, and the old sense of normality might never return as it was. The effort that many within our community made to help others still goes on and we must be thankful for the hard work that so many put into doing this. At some stage it will stop, at some stage Government funding will trickle to a halt, at some stage reality will kick in. This might sound negative but as mentioned its about reality and sometimes reality is what is needed to give us a proverbial kick up the backside. No more can we be complacent and expect others to hand everything to us on a plate, if we want to be better we have to work to do that and we have to help others move along the same road.

The generation of social media addicts is a lot different from those who queued in Belfast in September 1912 to sign the Ulster Covenant. Could you picture our young now doing this? The selfies and Tiktok videos as they pouted and posed; not really interested in the motive behind it just fixated with the amount of followers they can gain by doing so. Perhaps there is a lot of exaggeration in that last sentence but it shows how much things have changed over the generations and the lack of political drive from our young. Is it a good thing that our children prefer

to sit at home and avoid our history and culture, surely not? Yet the reality of the past is getting lost as elements prefer to rewrite the history that we lived and experienced, the reality of the troubles that our community had to burden is now vastly different to the narrative that others like to tell. Our young don't seem driven to learn about our history so its almost as if we have gave up trying to educate them whereas Nationalist communities have a confidence based around the teachings they received at home and school.

Culture has certainly taken a bashing this summer but its worth pointing out the good work that many in the Loyal Orders done by cancelling big parades and events and ensuring the health of their members and supporters. The moral high ground has certainly been stood upon and looking down upon those Republicans who decided to flout the rules at every chance says more about them than us. Surely the amount of people who came out all summer to watch single bands parade is heartening and gives us a glimmer of hope that we can recapture the pride that generations before us felt at their heritage and history. We have already mentioned Ulster Day and its worth looking into the history around this period, the signing of the covenant in defiance of Home Rule, the World War that followed it and the Hundred years of Northern Ireland are all something we must talk about and teach to our children and grandchildren so its not forgotten.

Yet as we face down the Covid-19 pandemic politics in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom is at a very difficult stage as the fall out from Brexit hits us. The potential changing of the withdrawal agreement, the pushing for trade deals with USA and the threats from the EU all seem to circle around us here as we

have the words border and peace process continually hammered into the media. The threat that exists to peace is never defined, even though we are now twenty six years into ceasefires and many of the structures and personnel who were involved in our 'bloody country' are nowhere near what they once were on both sides. Instead the language used is almost like blackmail, its telling us that there will be no trade deals unless the Good Friday Agreement is honoured, the EU is threatening food shortages and all the while people in Northern Ireland are in a political grey area and it doesn't help community relations.

We need to be thinking instead of 2021 and what the centenary will look like as we celebrate everything good about our wee country. The sporting heroes, the personalities, the scenery, the tourism, even the unique sense of humour and all that comes with our locality is something we have to champion and remind everyone of next year. Covid-19 might have ruined 2021 but next year will be bigger and better and we must all do what we can to promote our identity. The Orange Order has already launched a new flag which looks fantastic and incorporates aspects of not just Northern Ireland but the symbols that represent the whole of the United Kingdom. The shamrock, the rose, the crown, the thistle and all the pieces that shows what makes us a United Kingdom are represented on this new flag and one hundred years of such a troubled country that still remains an integral part of the United Kingdom says a lot about the determination and desire to remain British Citizens. We have been bombed, murdered, maimed and then post ceasefire have been denounced as bigots, abusers of human rights and

dinosaurs but the fact remains that we still exist and there is no sign of Northern Ireland merging into a United Ireland nor a New Ireland for a long time yet. The Union which we all hold firm in our support of is unbreakable and neither the defeated Scottish Independence referendum nor the Brexit strategy has broke any links as some predicted.

At the time of writing the postcode restrictions have been increased to include all of Northern Ireland and Boris Johnson has done a nationwide address spelling out what needs to be done. "There are unquestionably difficult months ahead" was his words and we have all experienced some hard months which we though were getting easier. The uniformity of having all regions saying that we cannot visit other households shows that a tough message is being delivered but with people having endured separation from close family members, communicating via zoom and having facetimes instead of physical company then this is a stern blow to families and especially the elderly and infirm. Yet we are told that it is fine to mix in pubs and restaurants but not at home. We can sit in a garden in the cold but cant go indoors; the messages are rather contradictory at times but regardless of this we all need to do what we can to ensure safety is paramount and we don't risk passing on any infections.

To close its that time of year when we all usually start to think about Halloween and Christmas but like every year we have to remind everyone that its time to take flags down. There is nothing worse than tattered or torn flags being left to rot or fall off a lamppost so show some pride and remove them.

BREXIT "SAFEGUARDS" TO BE PUT IN PLACE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

A bill designed to "protect and uphold economic considerations" for Northern Ireland through the Brexit process has been unveiled in the House of Commons in Westminster. Ministers say it contains vital safeguards to protect Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, if negotiations on a future trade deal break down. But critics, including a number of Tory MPs, warned it risks damaging the UK by breaching international law. Although the government has a majority of 80 in the Commons, it is braced for rebellions in the coming weeks as the legislation receives detailed scrutiny. Several prominent Conservatives, including former Chancellor Sajid Javid, have said they could not support the final bill unless it is amended.

The bill is designed to enable goods and services to flow freely across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland when the UK leaves the EU's single market and customs union on 1st January 2021. But, some would say controversially, it gives the government the power to change aspects of the EU withdrawal agreement, a legally-binding deal governing the terms of the UK's exit from the EU earlier this year. Ministers say this is a failsafe mechanism in case the EU interprets the agreement, in particular the Northern Ireland Protocol designed to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, in an "extreme and unreasonable" way.

During a five-hour debate in the House of Commons on Monday 14th September, Mr Johnson claimed the EU's current approach could lead to excessive checks and even tariffs on goods moving from



Great Britain to Northern Ireland. This would clearly impact heavily on Northern Ireland and thus be a 'barrier' to fair trade and the smooth running of all parts of the United Kingdom. He said the bill would ensure the UK's "economic and political integrity", accusing the EU of making unfair demands to "exert leverage" in the trade talks - including a threat to block food exports.

The EU had previously thought that it had secured some sort of agreement in relation to Northern Ireland and its place within the "island of Ireland" in an economic sense. It proposed doing this by effectively keeping Northern Ireland in the EU's single market for goods. This would have meant products entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK will be subject to new checks and control - the so-called Irish Sea border. However, the precise nature of these checks needs to be agreed by the EU and UK and are being negotiated in parallel with the trade talks, which Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants concluded by the next European Council meeting on 15th October. It has been suggested that the EU will somehow use Northern Ireland as a bargaining chip to exert more pressure on the

UK government to accede to further demands down the line. It would also mean that when relevant EU laws are amended or new ones are drawn up, they will also apply in Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland only. This is seen to be unacceptable.

Local politicians had mixed views on the Conservative governments attempt to ensure parity for Northern Ireland. Arlene Foster, leader of the DUP and First Minister stated that the party would support the government's bill and that Northern Ireland was "not the plaything of the EU". "The EU needs to stop using Northern Ireland to get their own way," she told assembly members at Stormont on the 14th September. The party's chief whip in Westminster, Sammy Wilson MP, said the bill was a massive step forward for business in Northern Ireland - but "not the finished product". Speaking in the Commons, he said if the bill was an attempt to try and "undo some of the damage done by the withdrawal agreement", then his party would support its passage. "The warnings this party gave about the deal are now coming home to the government and they are beginning to realise the impact it had," he added.

The Ulster Unionist Party does not support the protocol, but said the government should not be threatening to break international law to "right a terrible wrong". Predictably Sinn Féin, the SDLP, Alliance and the Greens have criticised the British government for reneging on previous commitments and argue that overriding the NI Protocol would "critically undermine the Good Friday Agreement political framework and peace process". All of these political parties never seem to be able to spell out who exactly would be "threatening the peace process" should agreement not be reached. In fact, Sinn Féin bring out this phrase on a daily basis. Only one political party is wedded to threats of violence and that party is Sinn Féin. The Alliance party have never hidden their desire to thwart Brexit and so that can be excused for acting as poodles for the Shinnars. The SDLP and Greens continue to try and be relevant, but fail miserably.

There will no doubt be further political upheaval and shenanigans as the bill goes before the House of Lords and then back to the commons for further amendments and discussion. This is clearly not over but the Conservative Government are clearly determined to ensure that the "union" of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland exits the EU together as one and nothing down the line threatens to jeopardise "breaking off" Northern Ireland into some sort of quasi EU plaything to be used and abused should the Tories fail to pay their divorce bill. Difficult times ahead and we will be paying close attention to all the developments.



Jackie McDONALD

Straight talking from the heart of Loyalist South Belfast

NO SURRENDER TO DRUG DEALERS



COVID-19 - SOCIAL DISTANCING

Too many people blatantly ignoring the advice and warnings being given by the British Government and Health Officials obviously there are some amongst us who care more about drink than they do about their health or about the health and well being of their nearest and dearest. At the beginning of Lockdown we were advised that it was the elderly within our Communities that were most vulnerable and that certainly proved to be the case with, unfortunately, many deaths in Nursing Homes and in our Hospitals. Pre Lockdown people were fighting over toilet rolls and hand sanitiser they were obviously concerned about the virus situation and were listening to Government advice yet now we are being told of Pubs and Clubs being packed with people

out socialising with complete disregard for their own health and who they might pass the virus onto. It's not the elderly who are most at risk now it's the 20-40 year olds who are testing Positive probably because of their social activities.

The one piece of news that I was delighted to hear was that Lockdown had a serious impact on Drug Dealers and their activities, their supplies were reportedly drying up even though there was still great demand for their poison. I hope that in some way the circumstances of Lockdown created massive problems for these parasites and gave social 'users' some respite and time to reflect on just how much harm they may be doing themselves. Drug Dealers are Death Dealers destroying peoples lives through death and addiction and creating mental health issues which all too often result in suicide. Every time we see pathetic scenes on

Social Media or witness them on our streets of young people completely off their heads and shaming themselves we should remind ourselves that they are someones Son or Daughter; members of families who are distraught because they can do no more to help those they love and care for. The Media are quick to point the finger of blame at Loyalist Paramilitaries in this despicable drug trade and whilst there may be some evidence of that in a few Protestant areas it is absolutely wrong of them to 'Tar everyone with the same Brush'. Those responsible for poisoning our children, should they be Catholic or Protestant, should be dealt with through Due Process of the Law there has to be consequences for their actions and so far there haven't been certainly not enough. Lack of positive action by the PSNI is actually encouraging more young people to become involved to

make themselves some easy money and have unlimited access to drugs for personal use. Parents need to warn their children of the dangers of drug taking (or dealing) unfortunately many of them are habitual drug takers themselves and they don't see any problem (sure everyone's doing it) attitude.

I keep saying that our young people are our future because they are! We, all of us with any positive influence be it Parents, Schools, Youth Clubs, Churches and Politicians need to realise that we can't ignore the problems and the temptations that young people are facing today they need guidance, good advice and very importantly understanding and encouragement. We all know some fantastic kids, kids to be proud of, but we all know some young ones who might be tempted to go down the wrong road and we must do everything we can to help them resist temptation. Education is so vitally important with prospects of a career or of finding a decent job so they can provide for their families. Teenagers don't always think about these things they just want to live for the minute but can we blame them?

Two imminent issues today are of course the possibility of another Lockdown and the dreaded 'Brexit' Everyone was frustrated and fed up with the restrictions imposed through the previous Lockdown there were many people suffering mental health problems and there were many Domestic disputes in family homes. The Suicide rate increased too unfortunately and it became obvious to the Government and the majority of people here that somehow there had to be a way to allow some sort of relaxation, some interaction within Communities, not to mention the financial problems for Businesses and Employees.

We've all been warned about this 'Second Wave' of the virus and I believe it will come. Once the coughs and sneezes start germs will spread some people returning from foreign holiday too might be bringing the virus back with them. Large gatherings at protests, funerals or even house parties won't help the situation, people have become complacent and we can understand why but the serious threat of a 'Second Wave' is more probable than possible. There may be speculation that a second Lockdown might be a ploy to prevent possible protests against whatever Boris decides regarding a Hard Border or a Border Down The Irish Sea or whatever. Politicians here will no doubt be under severe pressure to make sure the Prime Ministers decision is the right one for the people of Northern Ireland and our desire to remain part of the United Kingdom. There are difficult times ahead of us all, we need to think seriously as to how we might face them, certainly in the event of a 'Second Wave' we need to face them together, act responsibly and show consideration for others.

STAY SAFE AND SUSTAIN OUR SUPPORT FOR THE NHS!

CONCERNED ABOUT MANY ASPECTS OF LOYALISM

I was sitting at home last week when I got an unexpected phone call from the journalist Eamonn Mallie thinking to myself 'I wonder what Eamonn is looking now', as this usually only happens when he has a question or two for me. I've known Eamonn for a long time and it's always good to chat with him, I answered out of curiosity and I enjoyed the conversation. He was checking about Raymond Smallwoods surname, with an 's' at the end or not, I confirmed the 's' anyway we went on to reminisce about past events and one in particular being the John McMichael Memorial which was held in the Laganview Centre in Old Warren Estate on

1st November 2012, Chaired brilliantly by Eamonn.

We both remarked just how significant that event was with the bringing together of so many people from such different backgrounds (there is some excellent clips available on Youtube) and the effort made by my South Belfast UPRG colleagues; a really well organised event worthy of John McMichael on the 25th Anniversary of his murder. We went on to talk about how Loyalism has moved on or changed since that evening and unfortunately the progress that South Belfast Ulster Political Research Group had hoped for as a result of such an historic event hasn't materialised.

We are very concerned about many aspects of Loyalism, the future of our young people in particular, because they are OUR future, we say this repeatedly and will continue to do so. We all need to appreciate how young people feel today, how difficult it is for so many, the temptations they face and the way so many are simply written off and ignored or treated like some sort of nuisance. Some of our young ones do have attitude, haven't we all at some stage in our lives, it's part of growing up in today's environment and it isn't the young that have created this environment. Poor education, no job prospects, no respect or understanding for so many in working class areas, both Catholic and Protestant, where is the encouragement or the facilities to help them develop the capacity to improve and be prepared for a better way of life? I've spoken to and listened to many teenagers

from areas in South Belfast and Social Media has a major influence on their attitude and behaviour; it can be a curse a times with faceless keyboard warriors talking nonsense. Our young people need to be given good advice and the benefit of our experiences so that they can understand that they will see life differently in a few years time. Many will have partners, children of

their own and the responsibilities that go along with all that. We need a better relationship with our young people, to include them in local projects, in conversations and decision making regarding issues that may effect them and/or their Communities. Our young people are OUR future, if we don't help them prepare for it what might that future hold?



IN MEMORIAM

Vol Trevor Stafford 'D' Coy
Died 30th September 2019
Proudly remembered by his friends
and comrades 'D' Battalion South
Belfast Brigade
Ulster Defence Association
Quis Separabit

Vol Paul Hodgkins, 'J' Coy
(Yorkshire)
Died 1st September 2008
Proudly remembered by his friends
and comrades in Yorkshire and 'D'
Battalion South Belfast Brigade
Ulster Defence Association
Quis Separabit

DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS CONTINUE TO TERRORISE LOCAL HOLYLAND COMMUNITY



Unruled students returning to the Holyland area of South Belfast continue to disrupt the lives of local residents. From house parties (noise nuisance) to antisocial behaviour to abusing females who happen to be walking past, the disruptive and downright ignorant students flout every rule and advice offered to them. Early every morning street cleaners and wardens tidy up and bag up thousands of bottles and assorted detritus as well as water away blood and vomit and God knows what else. Residents feel plagued by this type of behaviour which has been going on for years. The feeble response from all the statutory agencies adds to the upset.

Representatives from both UU and QUB told the BBC Radio Ulster's Good Morning Ulster programme they believe it was only a minority of students who were involved in antisocial behaviour. Looking at the videos and pictures of the hordes of people out on the street it appears to be far more than a tiny minority. The universities said they were working with the police, Belfast City Council and other agencies to tackle the issue, including Covid-19 breaches. Yet

finances and arrests were a total of one, just one, during the past fortnight.

"We've written to every single student, they'll have also had very direct engagement about that during their induction week this week," said Prof Seawright, an executive dean at UU. He added that it "spells out very, very clearly that any antisocial behaviour, which includes breaches of the guidelines, will be subject to the university's disciplinary process and that could lead to suspension or expulsion from their degrees". Yet The Loyalist Magazine can reveal that the total of expulsions for antisocial behaviour between 2017 to 2020 stands at ZERO. 52 students have been 'advised' about their behaviour. That is a very small number indeed compared to the awful scenes that are being witnessed.

Queen's Pro-vice chancellor, Prof Stuart Elborn said QUB had "very clear guidelines for off-campus behaviour". Where there are complaints and we pick those up and verify them, we will absolutely deal with students who are behaving in an antisocial way in terms of general behaviour, but particularly in terms of their adherence to

public health guidelines for Covid-19." He failed to mention that they way that the students were being 'dealt' with included just a written reminder of behaviour and the occasional 'verbal advice'. Once again strict disciplinary measures were absent and no student suffered any consequence of their antisocial activities.

Green Party councillor Aine Groogan said the spike in antisocial behaviour is "entirely predictable at the start of a new university term but it's also exceptionally dangerous in the midst of a pandemic". The public health risks of young people congregating in small spaces at present are huge." She added that the Holyland area had been let go to "wreck and ruin for many years" and that "the responsibility lies with government at many levels as well as statutory agencies". In this first instance, I want to see the Department of Justice enable a more robust response to antisocial behaviour. I'd urge the justice minister to bring forward workable legislation to bring our anti-social behaviour law in line with other parts of the UK." This very sensible and hard-hitting response is exactly what

residents are calling for. Year after year after year they have had to put up with the most appalling incidents ranging from 'simple' antisocial behaviour and noise pollution all the way up to riot and arson! It is simply intolerable and no other area would put up with it.

The PSNI did their usual hand wringing exercise and talked about education and engagement but by now we have all heard this once too often. Arrests, fines and jail should be the order of the day, not liberal shrugging of shoulders. Residents are in despair and not a single person from any of these so called 'caring' statutory bodies has come up with a joined up and decisive plan to stop this aggravation once and for all. Banning HMO's (House of Multiple Occupancy) would be a start, Greedy landlords have a lot to answer for too. A zero-tolerance approach taken for just one year would solve this issue virtually instantly and give the residents some much needed peace and quiet. But this seems beyond the wit of everyone and we will no doubt be back here next year reporting on the same thing.

ELEVEN ROYAL MARINES MURDERED



You may not have heard of Deal, a seaside town in Kent, the county known as The Garden of England due to its picturesque views and stunning landscapes. However, on the 22nd September 1989, Deal would become the centre of attention for the worlds media as it was shaken to its core at 8:22am as a 15lb bomb ripped through the Royal Marine's School of Music, planted by the IRA. Tragically, Ten Royal Marines lost their lives that day, with One dying later in hospital on the 18th October 1989, a further Twenty-One sustained injuries.

It was fortunate that the majority of the Marines were on the parade square rehearsing marching drills or the death toll would have been considerably higher. For those who remained in the recreational centre, they took the full force of the blast and were buried under the rubble, leaving those on the parade square to search through the rubble in the hope of finding their comrades alive! The magnitude of the blast was that great that a body was later recovered from the roof of a nearby house and it was that

loud, it could be heard in Deal town centre two miles away. The attack on Deal Barracks was a concerted effort by the IRA as they intensified their attacks on military structures as it signified the twentieth year of British troops in Northern Ireland. A week after the bomb, the Royal Marine band paraded through Deal, with vacant positions within their ranks to represent where the injured or dead Marines would have been. The attack on the Deal Barracks is all the more abhorrent as the Marines were not armed

personnel, the security for the barracks was provided by a civilian contractor. After the incident a review of security was carried out at all UK military bases. As Sinn Fein call for the historical inquiries team to persecute and prosecute members of the armed forces for carrying out their duty, the corridors of Stormont are eerily quiet for those seeking retribution and justice for the families of those who have lost loved ones at the hands of IRA. As this goes to print, no one has been convicted of the Deal Barracks bombing. Below are the names of those who lost their lives as a result of the bombing.

Mick Ball, 24, flautist, saxophone and piccolo player
Andy Cleatheroe, 25, saxophonist
Trevor Davies, 39, band corporal
Richard Fice, 22, principal trumpet player
Richard Jones, 27, flautist
Dave McMillan, 26, band corporal
Chris Nolan, 21, violinist
Dean Pavey, 31, band corporal
Mark Patch, 26, flautist, piccolo player and saxophonist
Tim Reeves, 24, violinist and clarinetist
Bob Simmonds, 34, violinist and clarinetist
At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

THE APOLOGETIC GENERATION



It seems these days we all need to apologise for not just our actions but for every generation prior to us. The wrongdoings that someone actioned in the past appears to be getting flagged up at every occasion and it isn't the worldwide Black

Lives Matter movement that is being referred to, no its some of our own local politicians. The latest is by Paula 'I used to be a Unionist' Bradshaw as she hit the headlines for her apology over a fancy-dress party. Her crime ten years ago

was to dress up as Mr T of the A-Team and the blackening of the face must have offended so many people that she chose to highlight this and clear her own conscience. Anyone who seen the picture will probably admit it was

the worst impression of a TV character there is but the issue at hand here is the WOKE generation who are insisting that everyone has guilt and we all must say we are sorry or avoid offending anyone else. There are some who are saying that Bradshaw has only herself to blame as she and her party of Non-Unionists attack similarly at every opportunity but the truth is why lower ourselves and our community to their levels. Why should people have to spend their lives worrying about who or what they might offend?

ULSTER DAY - A LARGELY FORGOTTEN ANNIVERSARY

The summer period known colloquially as 'the marching season' usually starts in line with the 1st July and the various parades and events held to mark the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The date is forever etched in the minds of proud Ulstermen and women as they think of their forefathers who bravely fought in the trenches during the Great War. Then comes the 12th July when thousands of Orange brethren march in commemoration of King William and the Glorious Revolution which was achieved after the Battle of Aughrim in 1691 and the ending of Williamite wars. August has the single largest parade in the marching calendar as the Apprentice Boys walk to celebrate the ending of the siege in 1689 in the Maiden City of Londonderry. At the

same time in Enniskillen the Royal Black Perceptory celebrate the Battle of their home town and of course the same group hosts the last Saturday demonstration all over Northern Ireland which effectively draws it all to a close.

Then of course there is Ulster Day which is something many overlook but an anniversary of something which we will never again see. The day when 237,368 men and 234,046 women across the north of Ireland and beyond signed the Ulster Covenant and Declaration, pledging their opposition to Home Rule, which was then being debated by the British government.

The third Home Rule bill - which fell short of full independence but devolved power from London - was opposed by the Unionists, who

wanted to maintain Ulster's position within the United Kingdom.

A document based on the 17th century Scottish National Covenant was drawn up to serve as a solemn oath.

28th September was declared Ulster Day, and meetings were held across the region to drum up support. On the day itself, many Protestant churches held special services, and Belfast's many factories closed to enable workers to join the crowds at City Hall; Sir Edward Carson was the first to sign. Women signed the Declaration at nearby Ulster Hall.

Copies of the document were signed at over 500 locations across Ulster, and further afield in England and Manchester over the following weeks.

Some saw in the Home Rule bill the ignorance of English politicians and party politics.

A letter to the Guardian claimed that 'to the average Englishman Ireland means a troublesome island somewhere in the Atlantic, where the natives run half naked over bogs flourishing shillelaghs whilst behind them all lurks a mysterious conspirator known as "the Priest"...'.

The writer suggested a bill should be drafted by businessmen from all sides of the argument, making it 'satisfactory to everyone in Ireland except a few Orangemen and Molly Maguires.'

The determination of these brave people to face down the Government they declared allegiance to was a tough decision to make but with the threat of Home Rule something had to happen. The rise in militancy seen the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force who imported arms and stood ready to fight for their identity. That the Great War broke out when it did meant these men laid down their lives in great number in service of their King (As too did tens of thousands of Irish Nationalists it has to be said) and we can only try and think of what sort of a bloody civil war Ireland would have faced if things had been different.

Ulster Day is something we should all be proud of, a day when we think back to the determination and sacrifice our past generations had and the adversity they faced. We are undoubtedly in a better place now but there is political uncertainty still and if anything thinking back to those who came before surely must give us a sense of fight and a sense of pride. We are made of sturdy stuff and while 26 counties of Ireland might have left the United Kingdom we are on the verge of One Hundred years as a country and no doubt those who took part in Ulster Day 1912 played their part in making sure we are still here and still British.



Walton, Royal Avenue, Belfast.
Ulster Day, Sept. 28th, 1912. Orangemen and Unionist Clubs marching to the City Hall, Belfast, to sign the Covenant against Home Rule.



Around the Union

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: THE SCOTTISH UNIONIST PROBLEM...

At times its hard to believe the 2014 independence referendum seen a 28 to 4 win for the No campaign in council areas across Scotland. Although its clear unionists outnumber nationalists in those 28 areas, it certainly doesn't appear to be the case in local and general elections, thanks to a split in the unionist vote.

In the 2019 general election the SNP cleared up in 48 out of 59 seats in Scotland, despite only receiving 45% of the votes - unchanged from the referendum result in 2014. The problem is one that has blighted Ulster Unionism for decades; too many unionist parties vs one major nationalist party.

With loyalties in Scotland not quite as clear cut as in Northern Ireland, old party political allegiances tend to come into play. The leafy dream of a single unionist party is even less likely in Scotland than it is in Northern Ireland. In ex-mining areas like Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, and the Lothians, working class unionists find themselves torn between a vote for the Tory party, who many still blame for the industry's demise, or voting for Labour, riddled with Irish Republican sympathisers, who are no friend of the union. In these areas, a unionist's tory vote is often a vote wasted, as that middle ground of working class voters sway towards Labour or SNP.

On the flip side, in areas like Perthshire, Aberdeenshire, Renfrewshire and the borders, the working class unionist vote is wasted on Labour! Those working class areas that find themselves sharing a

constituency with more affluent areas must swallow their pride for the greater good of unionism and vote Tory if they are to be effective in fighting the SNP.

Scottish Labour appear almost a shadow of their former selves. That is no coincidence - Alex Salmond and Co spent decades going after the catholic vote, appearing regularly with a column in the Scottish Catholic Observer. Glasgow's switch from a Labour stronghold to an SNP stronghold tells you all you need to know about how well that went! Further to that; The SNP actually vetted and passed active Irish republicans like Alan Casey as fit and proper to stand in wards in working class areas in the West of Scotland, a far cry away from the traditional SNP types living in Aberdeenshire and Perthshire, decked in tweed clothing and talking in old Scot's tongue. You have to ask yourself, would these people be passed as fit and proper to stand for election in those more 'well-off' areas? Again, we know that is no mistake, the SNP have deliberately stoked up sectarian tensions in the lowlands in order to turn this into a religious vote, thus winning the catholic vote and prizing working class areas from Labour's grip!

On either side of the debate, you have the hardliners - the republicans, the loyalists, hardcore nationalists and unionists alike. They make up the 30% - 40% or so of each side who will vote almost religiously for the party or campaign they believe so strongly in. They will never be swayed to vote for the 'other side', so you are wasting

your time to try and get a reasonable debate out of them let alone convince them to change their vote. The key lies with winning over the middle ground voters. The voters who will vote based on politician's promises, political party's performances, and ongoing scandals and developments which all effect voting trends. These are the people we all must try to convince to vote to remain in the UK.

It is your duty to win over the middle ground voters. You won't find them in your orange halls or loyalist pubs, they are the friends and family who have no great interest in loyalism or republicanism. They are the work colleagues who are not overly persuaded by either side, yet they all share one thing in common - all of them will be negatively impacted in the event of Scottish independence - its your job to make sure they are aware of that!

The fact of the matter is; the independence problem won't go away, it must be faced head on and defeated by a joint unionist front. This may require swallowing your pride to tactically vote, or it may require joint party initiatives like George Galloway's new 'alliance for unity' group. Galloway of course, no friend of loyalism! Can old enemies like Labour and Tory really be convinced to work together in certain target seats? Heres hoping!

There are dozens of unionist pages on social media that are updated daily with reasons why we should remain in the UK, it is our responsibility to like, share, and retweet their posts to make sure the word is out there. Don't just leave it to someone else!

Our message is clear, hands off the union, we are better together!

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

One of the largest areas of our work, but often the most undervalued, is the PUL community charitable work.

Year after year, many Lodges, RBP, ABOD branches, Bands and RSCs raise thousands of pounds for good causes both nationally and locally.

This year with the global pandemic has seen us going even more above and beyond to help local communities and in particular older and more vulnerable people in our area's.

In our own wee town of Whitburn over the last few months we have seen the band, the district and the local ABOD work hard to ensure that the older residents of the town got packages of food and some other items during the pandemic. Something we should all be proud of doing for the local community.

Members also happily donate to those charities where there are all types of different race, religion and sexual orientation that benefits from the respective charitable work carried out.

Yet in some quarters the charities that benefit from said fundraising refuse to give us the time of day with them refusing pictures and articles that have us in our collarette's or mention of the OO or ABOD etc etc.

Should we stop giving? Do we do less charity work? Absolutely not, that would be giving up and we never give up on our community. We simply move onto the next project and always look to move forward and better people's lives.

Receiving credit would be fantastic, but giving is not about receiving and we will continue to do so in the hope that people realise we are worthy of credit and worthy of some recognition.

A BACKWARDS STEP - BUT WHEN WILL WE MOVE FORWARD?

The latest Covid announcements have been met with great confusion and also perhaps the feeling of a never ending cycle of doom and gloom as we look towards the darker autumn months which will compound the hardship already felt by those at risk. Of course, by risk one doesn't mean just physically at the prospect of catching and having to fight Covid, but the mental courage needed to get through potential lockdowns be they local or as predicted right across the United Kingdom. Over the last few weeks, we have seen one step forward and two back as the general public thought the easing of restrictions was one more rung climbed towards normality but that's clearly now not the case. The imposition of localised restrictions based around a few postcodes was hard enough to decipher and even harder to enforce but no one thought this would be stretched out to cover every single postcode in the country.

Many people who would fall into vulnerable categories through underlying health conditions are fearful of a second wave and positive test cases are up but an equally important concern is the financial wellbeing of many families as they face the

ending of the Government backed Furlough scheme. While this has been reduced gradually in scale the end of October is now the cessation date and with that is feared a massive increase in benefits as businesses of all sizes struggle to get back to the pre Covid levels of revenue. Add to this the numerous small cafes, caterers and hospitality jobs that have no longer the same footfall in towns and cities as many offices have continued to push home working and the economics are definitely looking grim indeed.

Without sounding full of doom and gloom the annual flu outbreaks will hit and will add more pressure to the Health Service so we all need to do what we can to stay safe but there has to be some sense of progress if we are to beat this. Yes we know that large gatherings will hasten the spread and we have to do all we can to avoid occasions that will bring us within close contact to large groups but how long can we stay confined to small numbers in the garden especially as the cold and dark nights approach. Is it really that deadly that we must avoid a parent's home, a sibling or a neighbours? The allowance of a single person household into a social bubble is claimed to combat this but is it any more

safe meeting up with a group of strangers in a pub than it is to sit at a close relative or friends house to give them some company? That's the thing with these guidelines they seem to pass out many contradictions and that is what is making the general public feel angry. The apathy towards guidelines that we have seen is a result of mixed messages and as we should be thinking about real progress instead, we go backwards but this time economically it could be a lot worse.

Of course, there is people who haven't helped with their actions, one person in Fermanagh returned from a holiday failed to self-isolate and decided to go for a night on the town which resulted in many more infections. The culprit was charged with this but how many more others have gotten away with sanctions? We only have to look at the Bobby Storey funeral to see the highest levels of hypocrisy from our own Deputy First Minister as she stood for selfies at a funeral that never was (he was cremated at the other side of the city) then the next week posed with a mask on while out shopping. We are currently getting daily coverage of the shenanigans going on in the student paradise of the Holylands as GAA bedecked

future professionals wreck and ruin with no care for the bigger issue of health. Then they will mostly be heading home to rural areas at the weekend after rubbing shoulders with any number of strangers is lost on them but what sort of example is set whenever the person some will likely have voted for doesn't seem to want to abide by her own regulations.

Sport is suffering too as matches are mostly played behind closed doors with a massive revenue being lost to small clubs but there is now no real prospect of this changing so how will the future of local football for instance go? The GAA like their political leaders seem to have forgotten about restrictions if we are to go by the footage of the recent final as a pitch invasion took place to cheer the winners on. Hugging, dancing and of course the odd party tune to get it up the Prods took place so just how are we ever to get that next step forward if people aren't prepared to move as one.

Times are hard, they appear to be getting harder and it seems the laws are getting worse. Let's hope the advent of a New Year will bring some cheer and reprieve and we can all look forward to better times ahead.



@theloyalistQS



Around the Union

Since football ceased earlier this year fans of all clubs have been left bitterly disappointed at not being able to follow / watch their team...

In Scotland, that's probably felt more than anywhere else on the planet... Rangers fans follow the team all over the world and to not be permitted to do so is heart breaking to say the least.

Personally, due to me being the convenor of the local Rangers Supporters Club, I've got to be honest and say that I've enjoyed some of the break. No buses to organise, names to take, cash to count, tickets to drive all over Scotland collecting and redistributing. Ah, it's been bliss.... But the time has come, my holiday is over, and I want/need to be back busy and getting the brain ticking again....

Football is back, but not as we all know and love it. Yes, I awaken each Saturday with a smile and get excited to watch the famous. But it's not the same as a 6am pick up with a crate of Budweiser and the camaraderie with the

troops as we travel the length and breadth of the country week after week.

Middle to end September is the date being circulated as we stand and I will have to start getting ready for that date: even though we don't know what day one looks like.

My head is spinning:

- How many fans?
- What size of bus?
- Home fans only or can we travel?
- Has the bus company survived?
- What's the club funds like?
- Do people still want to go?

All the questions that are running through my mind and will ultimately shape the future of the club. What does the new world look like and where do I fit in...

This is no doubt being repeated by many bus convenors all over the UK mainland and Ulster as we move into an even more uncertain world.... This time it is more important, this time its Rangers....



LETTERS to the EDITOR

Dear Editor,

During the weekend of the 19th and 20th of September we witnessed some appalling scenes following a GAA match in both Omagh and Dungannon after the Dungannon Clarke's side won the Tyrone Final. Numerous 'fans' ran onto the pitch and proceeded to flood the area without regard for social distancing. What was particularly concerning after the match were videos circulating on social media of people in numbered shirts holding a trophy aloft launching into pro-IRA chanting. We need to establish as a matter of urgency if these scenes relate to fans or actual players from the match itself because such scenes cause a great deal of hurt and offence to many people and can only serve to further damage the already poor reputation of the GAA. All of this ties in with the 'example' set by the Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, who tarnished whatever image she had (as well as diminished what little authority she claims to possess) when she broke the law and attended a

Republican funeral (along

with hundreds of other republicans and assorted criminal elements). So we can clearly see a link here and that link is Republican disobedience to the rule of law. They see themselves as being morally superior and thus can flout every rule and law and advice and plea. They are an absolute disgrace. We have already seen a rise in infections subsequent to the Bobby Storey illegal fake funeral and cremation shambles and now we will most probably witness a further rise in rural communities because of the GAA and their imbecilic supporters.

I would like to see the whole of the GAA barred from holding any sporting event until they can give guarantees as to the behaviour of their staff, players and supporters. They already have a poisonous attitude to the social norms of life, but I don't want to see them literally poisoning and infecting the rest of the law-abiding community due to their filthy habits and criminal activities.

Yours sincerely,

Angry in Dromore

Name and address supplied

**STOP
THE PERSECUTION OF
OUR VETERANS
THEY SERVED ALL!!**

Lest we forget

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Write to loyalpublications@yahoo.co.uk

Dear Editor,

I am a monthly reader and always look forward to the latest edition. I genuinely enjoy reading the opinions of normal people in your letter section. It leaves me compelled to write. I like to think I am a normal guy in my mid 30's raising a young family and like all middle aged men, my family is my main concern. I have watched the world change over the last few years, and not for better unfortunately. It started with issues such as sexuality, which is fine, personal preference and all that. This is not something people outside of that relationship should ever have an opinion on. It is not their life nor does it affect anyone else. No problem. Many had an opinion, now it is a large movement with monthly celebrations.

Then we decided gender was an issue. I use the word "we" because in today's world it is everyone or no one. It is now unacceptable to be impartial or just not care.

Anyway, back to gender.

We should not label our children boys or girls. We should let them decide what they want to be. Because after all, with all of the mixed signals appearing on today's TV, our young and innocent children might want to copy some of the glorified nonsense they have no choice but to watch on mainstream media outlets.

Sorry but civilisation has survived as males and females since the beginning of time, so I don't think we need to change this in order not to hurt a few people's feelings. But that's only my opinion.

We swiftly moved on to race and skin colour. Now this one has really got me confused. Racism is something that has been going on for centuries but has been vigorously claimed by people with black or dark coloured skin.

I've never heard a cry of racism from anyone of white or fair coloured skin. Is it a thing?

I'm sure verbal abuse is thrown around against all types but only recognised as offensive by some. Firstly what is offensive about being called black or white? It is only a colour.

I understand racism fully and how it can effect people in certain areas of life, but we all choose what path we walk down. We are all the creators of our own destiny. When I see the claim "black people don't get opportunities like white people" I scratch my head. Who are highest paid people in the country? The most adored? The most looked up to? Athletes... Football players, top of their profession. Players like Raheem Sterling, Marcus Rashford, Mbappe, Neymar, the list goes on.

Boxing, Anthony Joshua. Millionaire. Top of his profession. Formula 1. Lewis Hamilton. Multi millionaire. Top of his profession. The Williams sisters in tennis. Icons!

A person is judged on their actions as a man or a woman, not on the colour of their skin.

I am a big fan of all of the above mentioned.

Police brutality is the biggest issue, but can only happen if a crime is committed. So are we defending criminals over law abiding citizens now? It certainly looks like it. I know there are incidents of injustice and I know there is a lot more to it but having Black Lives Matter rammed down your throat is becoming tedious and causing more divide, especially with the message being hijacked by power hungry opportunists. Being called black is now bigger news than child sex trafficking. I sympathise with the struggles of minorities but let's not tar everyone with the same brush.

Now we can't forget about Corona Virus or Covid 19 as we like to call it. The virus that has world leaders stumbling around in the dark looking for a light switch.

Something else that everyone can have an opinion on.

After a lengthy lockdown, restriction began to lift. Wear a mask and don't gather in large groups we were told. Unless you need to protest or play sport. You cannot visit your grandparents or have a drink in your neighbour's house.

But you can eat out to help out. Cram packed into restaurants without a mask in sight. If you or a family member have symptoms you must self isolate and get tested. But healthy people getting tested are clogging up the system so don't get tested if you're not sick. The symptoms are like that of the common cold. Or the lack of taste and smell. Like hay-fever or a headcold?

We are putting restrictions in place but it won't be until Monday, so knock yourself out over the weekend. The laughable way this whole shambles has been conducted has wiped away all faith in government officials and strategy. How can any of this be taken seriously? I for one am sick of this nonsense.

All of it!

I work hard to support my family. I have never been in trouble with the law, nor have I ever offended

someone of different culture or creed. Yet I watch on as people who haven't lifted a finger to build anything, tear down this country over an opinion they aren't entitled to have. The world has imploded because any idiot can now have a voice. You can spread lies or deception through millions of people with the click of a button. Someone that can run fast or throw a ball through a hoop now has a louder voice than a person who has studied and actually has some intelligence. Like sheep we follow and 'like'. We retweet or we instapost.

The poison is social media.

We continue to absorb 'opinions' as they are rammed down our throats. It is now at the point where I can no longer determine truth from lies. Where will this stop. You think 2020 has been bad? This is only the beginning unless a true leader stands up and doesn't care about offending the ever offended.

Attacking someone else's beliefs is no way to promote your own agenda. It is one big contradiction. But hey, we can all have an opinion, unless it's not the right opinion.

Rant over,

Yours sincerely,
The Average Guy.

